

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN PRIORITY

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MANAMA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRIORITY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY

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AMEMBASSY DUBLIN PRIORITY
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.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: UNDER SECRETARY SISCO INTERVIEW ON "MEET THE PRESS"

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF

UNDER SECRETARY SISCO'S APPEARANCE ON "MEET THE PRESS"
TELEVISION PROGRAM, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23:

QUOTE MR. VALERIANI (NBC NEWS): MR. SISCO, IS THE UNITED STATES NOW CONSIDERING A MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY WITH ISRAEL IN ORDER TO GUARANTEE ISRAEL'S SECURITY AND SURVIVAL?

MR. SISCO: NO, IT IS NOT, MR. VALERIANI. I THINK THERE HAS BEEN A GREAT DEAL OF CONFUSION IN THE RECENT PRESS REPORTS. WE ARE FOCUSING, AS YOU KNOW, ON TRYING TO ACHIEVE AN INTERIM NEXT STEP.

THE QUESTION OF GUARANTEES HAS BEEN STUDIED OVER THE YEARS AND ANY STUDIES THAT WILL BE GIVEN TO THIS MATTER WILL BE IN RELATION TO AN OVERALL POLITICAL SETTLEMENT.

MR. VALERIANI: ISN'T SUCH A TREATY INEVITABLE IN HE CON-
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TEXT OF AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT?

MR. SISCO: WELL, LET ME SAY THIS: THERE IS A GREAT DEAL OF CONFUSION ABOUT THIS WORD "GUARANTEE." WE HAVE ALWAYS THOUGHT THAT THE BASIC ASSURANCE THAT IS ESSENTIAL IN THE AREA IS THE ACTUAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE PARTIES. ANY STUDY OF GUARANTEES I THINK WILL BE IN THE CONTEXT NOT

ONLY OF AN OVERALL
POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, BUT ALSO AS SUP-
PLEMENTARY AND COMPLEMENTARY TO THE AGEEMENT ITSELF.

WE THINK THE OBLIGATIONS THAT THE SIDES EXCHANGE WITH EACH

OTHER, WE THINK THE AGREEMENT THAT IS TO BE ACHIEVED BASED ON THE NOVEMBER 1967 RESOLUTION, INCLUDING THE QUESTION OF BORDERS, IS SOMETHING THAT HAS TO BE NEGOTIATED BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES. SO THAT WHEN ONE TALKS OF GUARANTEES, ONE HAS TO TALK IN TERMS OF A SUPPLEMENT AND A COMPLEMENT TO THE ACUAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE PARTIES.

MR. VALERIANI: THEN YOU DO NOT RULE OUT AN EVENTUAL DEFENSE TREATY WITH ISRAEL?

MR. SISCO: I AM SAYING THAT THIS IS SOMETHING WHICH IS QUITE FAR DOWN THE PIKE; IT IS SOMETHING THAT OBVIOUSLY WE WILL WANT TO LOOK AT IN THE CONTEXT OF A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT.

MR. GWERTZMAN (NEW YORK TIMES): MR. SISCO, WHEN DR. KISSINGER RETURNED FROM THE MIDDLE EAST HE SAID SOME PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE. WHAT WAS THIS PROGRESS?

MR. SISCO: I THINK THE ESSENTIAL PROGRESS, MR. GWERTZMAN, WAS IN DEFINING AND DEVELOPING THE FRAMEWORK FOR NEGOTIATIONS ON A POSSIBLE NEXT STEP.

AS YOU KNOW, WE EXPLORED THIS POSSIBILITY WITH ALL OF THE PARTIES PRINCIPALLY CONCERNED AND WE WILL SOON BE RETURNING TO THE AREA TO RESUME THE PROCESS. I AM FRANKLY GUARDEDLY OPTIMISTIC BECAUSE I THINK WE ARE BEGINNING TO SEE AT LEAST THE PARAMETERS OF THIS PROBLEM.
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MR. GWERTZMAN: SPECIFICALLY IN ISRAEL DR. KISSINGER SAID ISRAEL WOULD NOT HAVE TO GIVE UP TERRITORIES WITHOUT A

QUID PRO QUO. DID DR. KISSINGER GET FROM MR. SADAT IN EGYPT AN AGREEMENT THAT EGYPT HAD TO GIVE SOMETHING TO GET SOMETHING?

MR. SISCO: WELL, WITHOUT GETTING INTO THE SPECIFICS OF THE VARIOUS ELEMENTS, I THINK WE COME AWAY WITH THE FEELING

THAT THERE ARE REALLY TWO ELEMENTS HERE. THE QUESTION OF WITHDRAWAL, OF COURSE, HAS BEEN EMPHASIZED, AS WELL AS THAT THERE MUST BE PROGRESS TO PEACE. WE THINK THAT THE DESIRE FOR WITHDRAWAL AND THE DESIRE FOR PROGRESS TOWARDS PEACE WHICH HAVE BEEN EMPHASIZED ON ONE SIDE AND THE OTHER CAN BE RECONCILED, AND FOR THAT REASON I THINK THAT WE CAN LOOK FORWARD HOPEFULLY TO MOVING THIS ALONG.

MR. KRAFT (COLUMNIST, FIELD NEWSPAPER SYNDICATE): MR. SISCO, WOULD LIKE TO ASK A QUESTION THAT IS A LITTLE BIT OFF THE MIDDLE EAST THOUGH NOT ENTIRELY. MR. ALKHIMOV, WHO IS THE DEPUTY FOREIGN TRADE MINISTER OF THE SOVIET UNION,

GAVE A PRESS CONFERENCE HERE IN WASHINGTON THE OTHER DAY IN WHICH HE SAID THE ADMINISTRATION COULDN'T BE TRUSTED TO KEEP ITS COMMITMENTS. DOES THAT SEEM TO YOU AN APPROPRIATE THING FOR A SOVIET OFFICIAL TO BE SAYING HERE IN WASHINGTON?

MR. SISCO: WELL, I SAW THAT REPORT, MR. KRAFT. I WOULD SAY THIS: I THINK IF ONE LOOKS OVER THE HISTORY OF THE COMMITMENTS OF THE UNITED STATES SINCE WORLD WAR II, I THINK THE HISTORY IS VERY CLEAR.

I THINK WE HAVE UNDERTAKEN SPECIFIC COMMITMENTS; I THINK WE HAVE CARRIED THEM OUT, BOTH DEFINITELY, AS WELL AS IN GOOD FAITH AND I OBVIOUSLY WOULD NOT AGREE WITH THAT STATEMENT.

MR. KRAFT:
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DO YOU THINK IT WAS APPROPRIATE FOR HIM TO MAKE IT? ARE YOU GOING TO DO ANYTHING TO INDICATE DISPLEASURE, FOR EXAMPLE?

MR. SISCO: I THINK I WOULD JUST REPEAT AGAIN, I WOULD NOT AGREE WITH THAT STATEMENT.

MR. KRAFT: IN THE COURSE OF YOUR TRIP, THE SECRETARY SAW MR. WILSON AND MR. GROMYKO. DID YOU GET ANY REPORTS ON THE STATE OF MR. BREZHNEV'S POLITICAL AND PERSONAL HEALTH?

MR. SISCO: WELL, I THINK THE QUESTION OF HEALTH IS FAIRLY SELF-EVIDENT. MR. BREZHNEV WAS VERY HEAVILY INVOLVED IN THE ENTIRE WILSON VISIT. THIS WAS VERY CLEAR TO THE ENTIRE MEDIA AND AS FAR AS WE KNOW HE IS OPERATING FULLY, AS WAS EVIDENCED BY THAT PARTICULAR HIGH LEVEL EXCHANGE.

MR. TREWHITT (BALTIMORE SUN): TO PURSUE MR. KRAFT'S POINT ABOUT THE MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER GROMYKO, ONE GOT THE IMPRESSION THAT THE MEETING WAS SOMEWHAT CHILLY. I WONDER WHAT YOU CAN SAY ABOUT THE GENERAL STATE OF DETENTE?

IS DETENTE IN ANY WAY IN JEOPARDY AS A RESULT OF THE INTERVENTION OF CONGRESS?

MR. SISCO: WELL, I THINK THE BREAD AND BUTTER ISSUE BETWEEN OURSELVES AND THE SOVIET UNION IS THE QUESTION OF THE STRATEGIC BALANCE. THE SALT II TALKS ARE PROCEEDING. MY HOPE IS THAT THESE WILL MAKE PROGRESS. I THINK THAT IS THE KEY ELEMENT IN THE SITUATION. THESE WERE VERY GOOD TALKS THAT WE HAD WITH THE SOVIET UNION. OBVIOUSLY THE

PRACTICAL ISSUES THAT WERE DISCUSSED ARE BOTH DELICATE AND DIFFICULT, BUT I THINK MYSELF THAT THERE IS A VERY GOOD CHANCE THAT WE CAN DEEPEN THE RELATIONSHIP.

I THINK THE NEXT FEW MONTHS IN PARTICULAR ARE IMPORTANT IN RELATIONSHIP NOT ONLY TO SALT II, BUT THE WHOLE QUESTION OF THE EUROPEAN SECURITY CONFERENCE AS WELL AS THE QUESTION OF MUTUAL BALANCE, THE REDUCTION OF FORCES, AND THESE KEY AREAS OF THE MIDDLE EAST AND CYPRUS.

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MR. TREWHITT: HOW DO YOU ASSESS THE SOVIET ROLE IN ITS ATTITUDE ON THE MIDDLE EAST? AT WHAT POINT MUST THEY COME IN? ARE THEY UNHAPPY ABOUT BEING DEALT OUT AT THIS POINT?

MR. SISCO: MR. TREWHITT, NO PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST IS POSSIBLE IN THE LONG RUN WITHOUT THE COOPERATION OF THE SOVIET UNION. THE REASON WHY WE ARE UNDERTAKING THE KIND OF MIDDLEMAN ROLE THAT WE ARE PURSUING AT PRESENT IS THAT THIS IS THE DESIRE OF THE PARTIES. WE DON'T PRECLUDE THE RENEWAL OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE IN APPROPRIATE CIRCUMSTANCES. NEITHER ARE WE PURSUING A POLICY OF EXCLUDING THE SOVIET UNION IN THE MIDDLE EAST BECAUSE THE REALITY IS THEY ARE THERE, THEY HAVE INTERESTS. WE RECOGNIZE THAT IF YOU ARE GOING TO GET A DURABLE PEACE, THEY HAVE GOT TO BE PART OF THE PROCESS AND THEY HAVE GOT TO AGREE WITH IT.

MR. SPIVAK: MR. SECRETARY, MAY I ASK YOU THIS: THERE HAVE LONG BEEN MANY OBSTACLES TO PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. WHAT DO YOU NOW CONSIDER THE MAJOR OBSTACLES? HAVE THEY CHANGED ANY?

MR. SISCO: WELL, I FEEL THAT THE OBJECTIVE CONDITIONS IN THE AREA, IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE OCTOBER 1973 WAR, ACTUALLY HAVE IMPROVED THE PROSPECTS FOR PROGRESS TOWARDS PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. THE REASON WHY I SAY THIS IS THIS: I THINK THAT BOTH SIDES IN THE AFTERMATH OF THAT WAR CONCLUDED THAT THE BEST ALTERNATIVE IS THE PROCESS OF DIPLOMACY AND THE PROCESS OF NEGOTIATIONS. THE ARABS, FOR EXAMPLE, DID NOT FEEL THAT THEY NEEDED TO GO TO THE CONFERENCE TABLE WITH THEIR HEADS BOWED AS THE RESULT, FOR

EXAMPLE, OF THE DEFEAT DURING THE '67 WAR. I THINK THE AFTERMATH OF THE '73 WAR PROVES THAT BOTH SIDES, REGARDLESS OF THE FACT THERE ARE GAPS TO BE BRIDGED AND THERE ARE DIFFERENCES TO BE BRIDGED, THAT BOTH SIDES CONTINUE TO BE COMMITTED TO THE DIPLOMATIC PROCESS. I FIND THAT IS A HUGE PLUS IN THIS SITUATION.

MR. SPIVAK: MR. SECRETARY, A RECENT GALLUP POLL SHOWS
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THAT 61 PERCENT OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WHO WERE POLLED SAID THEY THOUGHT A WAR BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE ARABS IS LIKELY THIS YEAR. BASED ON YOUR INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SITUATION, DO YOU THINK A WAR IS LIKELY THIS YEAR?

MR. SISCO: WAR, OF COURSE, CAN NEVER BE PRECLUDED AS A POSSIBILITY. I DO NOT BELIEVE IT IS LIKELY. THE REASON IS I AM STILL HOPEFUL THAT WE CAN MAKE PROGRESS ON A STEP-BY-STEP BASIS AND I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE PROCESSES OF DIPLOMACY HAVE BEEN EXHAUSTED. MOREOVER, AS I READ THE AREA-- AND I HAVE NOW SPENT AS MANY AS FOUR MONTHS OF THE LAST TWELVE IN THE MIDDLE EAST--I THINK BOTH SIDES ARE SICK AND TIRED OF WAR. I THINK THE DIPLOMATIC PROCESS THAT WE ARE SEEING IS A REFLECTION OF THE DESIRE OF BOTH SIDES TO TRY TO GET SOMETHING DONE.

MR. SPIVAK: WAS THERE ANYTHING NEW AND ESPECIALLY ENCOURAGING FROM THIS TRIP THAT YOU CAME AWAY WITH?

MR. SISCO: NOTHING THAT ONE CAN CITE AS NEW OR DECISIVE. I FIND IT SIGNIFICANT THAT BOTH SIDES WANT THE PROCESS TO CONTINUE. AS LONG AS EACH SIDE WANTS THE PROCESS TO CONTINUE, IT MEANS EACH FEELS THERE IS STILL AN OPPORTUNITY TO ACHIEVE SOMETHING AS A RESULT OF DIALOGUE.

MR. VALERIANI: MR. SISCO, AN EGYPTIAN MAGAZINE SAID THIS PAST WEEK THAT ANOTHER EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI AGREEMENT IS ALREADY IN THE DAG. IS THAT REPORT ACCURATE?

MR. SISCO: NO, IT IS NOT. I WISH IT WERE, MR. VALERIANI. IT MIGHT SHORTEN THIS NEXT TRIP THAT WE INTEND TO TAKE IN THE MONTH OF MARCH.

MR. VALERIANI: WHAT MAKES IT SO DIFFICULT?

MR. SISCO: I THINK WHAT MAKES IT DIFFICULT IS THAT EACH SIDE NEEDS TO TRY TO MEET AT LEAST THE MINIMAL CONDITIONS AND THE MINIMAL TERMS OF THE OTHER. EACH SIDE IS OPERATING WITHIN WHAT I WOULD CONSIDER TO BE A RATHER CONFINED POLITICAL SETTING.
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MR. VALERIANI: FOR EXAMPLE? WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

MR. SISCO: IT MEANS THAT BOTH THE LEADERS IN ISRAEL, AS WELL AS EGYPT, HAVE TO GET THE KIND OF AGREEMENT THAT CAN BE FULLY JUSTIFIED BEFORE THEIR OWN PEOPLE. IN THE CASE OF ISRAEL IT HAS TO BE THE KIND OF AGREEMENT THAT CAN GET

THROUGH THE PARLIAMENTARY PROCESS. IN THE CASE OF EGYPT, NOT ONLY MUST THIS AGREEMENT BE SUPPORTED BY THE EGYPTIAN PEOPLE, I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WHATEVER AGREEMENT IS ACHIEVED HAVE BROAD SUPPORT IN THE ARAB WORLD AS WELL.

MR. GWERTZMAN: FOLLOWING UP ON THAT, HOW SERIOUS IS THE OPPOSITION OF SYRIA TO AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL?

MR. SISCO: I HAVE READ REPORTS OF THIS SORT, AND LET ME SAY THIS: THE FOCUS, AS IS EVIDENCED FROM THE PRESS, IS ON THE EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI ASPECT OF THE PROBLEM. HOWEVER, I WOULD RECALL TO YOU THAT WE WENT TO EVERY CAPITAL, THAT WE FEEL THE QUESTION OF AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT INVOLVES ALL OF THE FRONTS. WE WOULD LIKE TO MAKE PROGRESS WHEREVER PROGRESS CAN BE MADE, BUT WE ARE NOT EXCLUDING ANYONE OR ANY ASPECT OF THE PROBLEM.

MR. GWERTZMAN: BUT AFTER THE EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI AGREEMENT, PRESUMING IT IS CARRIED OUT, DO YOU ANTICIPATE THERE COULD BE AN ISRAELI-SYRIAN INTERIM ACCORD, OR WOULD ALL SIDES THEN GO TO GENEVA IMMEDIATELY?

MR. SISCO: IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO SPECULATE. WHAT WE WOULD DO IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES IS OBVIOUSLY TO CONSULT NOT ONLY WITH ISRAEL, BUT WITH THE KEY ARABS AS WELL, BOTH IN TERMS OF THE PROCESS AND WHERE WE COULD GO FROM THERE.

MR. KRAFT: HAVE THE SYRIANS SHOWN ANY DISPOSITION TO MAKE CONCESSIONS IN THE EVENT THE ISRAELIS MOVED A FEW KILOMETERS BACK FROM THE GOLAN HEIGHTS?

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MR. SISCO: WE ARE EXPLORING, OF COURSE, ALL POSSIBILITIES WITH BOTH SIDES. THE QUESTION OF CONCESSIONS OR CONCILIATION, OR WHETHER IT BE ON THE ISRAELI SIDE OR THE SYRIAN SIDE, I THINK ONE CAN'T MAKE THIS KIND OF A JUDGMENT AT THIS JUNCTURE. ONE WOULD HAVE TO MAKE THIS KIND OF A JUDGMENT AS THE PROCESS CONTINUES.

MR. KRAFT: WOULD YOU SAY, MR. SECRETARY, THAT THE ISRAELIS MIGHT BE MISSING THE BOAT BY NOT EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITIES FOR FLEXIBILITY IN THIS AREA?

MR. SISCO: WELL, THE ISRAELIS HAVE SAID, AND THE LEADERS IN ISRAEL ARE ON RECORD AS SAYING, THAT THEY ARE PREPARED TO TRY TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITIES OF A PEACE AGREEMENT ACROSS THE BOARD. SO IT CAN'T BE SAID THAT THE ISRAELIS HAVE NECESSARILY EXCLUDED ANY PARTICULAR FRONT IN TERMS OF

A PEACE AGREEMENT.

MR. KRAFT: IS THERE ANY DISPOSITION, MR. SECRETARY, TO
MOVE BACK AT ALL FROM THE GOLAN HEIGHTS? FIVE MILES EVEN?

MR. SISCO: AGAIN, I WOULD REFER YOU TO WHAT HAS BEEN SAID
PUBLICLY
BY THE ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER IN THIS REGARD.
THAT IS, THEY HAVE INDICATED A WILLINGNESS TO EXPLORE WHAT
THE POSSIBILITIES ARE ON ALL FRONTS AS IT RELATES TO A
PEACE AGREEMENT. NOW, LET ME EMPHASIZE "A PEACE AGREEMENT."

MR. TREWHITT: MR. SECRETARY, JUST TO CLARIFY A POINT--I
TAKE IT YOU FEEL IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT AN INTERIM AGREE-
MENT MIGHT CALL FOR A PARTIAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL ON THE
SINAI PENINSULA WITHOUT A CORRESPONDING WITHDRAWAL ON THE
NORTHERN FRONT WITH SYRIA.

MR. SISCO: I HAVEN'T SAID THAT, MR. TREWHITT. ALL I HAVE
SAID IS THAT THE FOCUS AT THIS PARTICULAR JUNCTURE IS ON
THE EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI ASPECT OF IT. BUT I WOULD UNDERSCORE
AGAIN THAT OUR DISCUSSIONS ARE NOT LIMITED TO THIS; OUR
DISCUSSIONS HAVE INCLUDED TALKS WITH THE SYRIANS AS WELL
AS THE JORDANIANS.

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MR. TREWHITT: I WOULD LIKE TO RETURN TO MR. VALERIANI'S
ORIGINAL QUESTION IF I MIGHT: OTHER THINGS SET ASIDE FOR
THE MOMENT--DOES THE UNITED STATES IN FACT GUARANTEE THE
CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL AS A SOVEREIGN STATE?

MR. SISCO: WELL, THE UNITED STATES, OF COURSE, HAS NO FOR-
MAL TREATY
RELATIONSHIP WITH THE STATE OF ISRAEL. HOWEVER,
I THINK OUR SUPPORT OVER THE YEARS HAS BEEN MADE MANIFEST,
BOTH ON THE BASIS OF AN ONGOING MILITARY ASSISTANCE RELA-
TIONSHIP AS WELL AS THE ECONOMIC SUPPORT. I FIND NO BASIC
CHANGE IN THE POSITION OF THE ADMINISTRATION IN THIS
REGARD. OUR SUPPORT CONTINUES.

MR. SPIVAK: MR. SECRETARY, FROM TIME TO TIME THERE HAS
BEEN DEBATE AS TO WHETHER THE UNITED STATES REGARDS THE
SECURITY OF ISRAEL AS A VITAL AMERICAN INTEREST AND THERE-
FORE COULD NOT AND WOULD NOT TOLERATE ITS DESTRUCTION.

CAN YOU TELL US WHETHER WE DO CONSIDER IT A VITAL INTEREST
TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE?

MR. SISCO: MY ANSWER WOULD BE AFFIRMATIVE. WE HAVE BEEN
LONG THE PRINCIPAL SUPPORTER OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE STATE
OF ISRAEL AND ITS ECONOMIC VIABILITY. WE HAVE PLAYED A

MAJOR ROLE IN THE CREATION OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL, AND I THINK EVER SINCE THE CREATION OF THE STATE WE HAVE BEEN ITS PRIME SUPPORT, MY ANSWER TO YOU WOULD BE AFFIRMATIVE.

MR. SPIVAK: MR. SECRETARY, THE NEW YORK POST INDICATED THAT YOU BELIEVE THAT THE U.S. IS MOVING TOWARD OFFICIAL RECOGNITION OF THE PALESTINIAN LIBERATION ORGANIZATION. DO YOU THINK THE U.S. IS LIKELY AT ANY TIME SOON TO OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZE THE PALESTINIAN LIBERATION GROUP?

MR. SISCO: I DO NOT BELIEVE THIS AND I HAVE MADE NO SUCH STATEMENT, BUT TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTION--

MR. SPIVAK: THEY SAID NOT THAT YOU MADE THE STATEMENT BUT THAT YOU HAVE INDICATED THIS.

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MR. SISCO: NEITHER IS TRUE. I WILL GET TO YOUR QUESTION HERE, MR. SPIVAK. INsofar AS THE PLO IS CONCERNED, WE HAVE MADE CLEAR THAT WE CANNOT IN GOOD CONSCIENCE RECOMMEND ANY NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE PLO AS LONG AS THE PLO FAILS TO RECOGNIZE THE EXISTENCE OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL. I SEE NO EVIDENCE THAT THE PLO HAS ANY INTENTION TO DO SO IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

MR. SPIVAK: WHERE DOES THAT PUT THE PLO AS FAR AS THE GENEVA CONFERENCE IS CONCERNED THEN?

MR. SISCO: WHEN WE CONVENED ORIGINALLY AT GENEVA, ONE DECISION WAS TAKEN, NAMELY, THAT THE QUESTION OF ANY ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS AT THAT CONFERENCE WOULD BE A DETERMINATION TO BE MADE BY THE MEMBERS OF THAT CONFERENCE. IN OTHER WORDS, THE QUESTION OF THE PLO WOULD COME UP IF AND WHEN ANY GENEVA CONFERENCE WERE RECONVENED, AND IT WOULD BE A DECISION THAT WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE BY THOSE PRESENT.

MR. VALERIANI: MR. SISCO, YOU SAID HERE THAT WAR CANNOT BE PRECLUDED IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND PRESIDENT FORD, SECRETARY KISSINGER HAVE EMPHASIZED REPEATEDLY HOW EXPLOSIVE THE AREA IS, HOW VOLATILE THE SITUATION. YET THE ADMINISTRATION IS POURING BILLIONS OF DOLLARS OF NEW WEAPONS INTO THE AREA ON BOTH SIDES. WHY?

MR. SISCO: WELL, LET ME SAY, FIRST OF ALL, THAT INsofar AS OUR SUPPORT ON THE MILITARY SIDE FOR ISRAEL IS CONCERNED, I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE MAINTAIN A TREND. INsofar

AS OUR ARMS SALE TO OTHER PARTS OF THE AREA--LET'S TAKE FIRST OF ALL THE GULF AND THE ARABIAN PENINSULA. I HAVE HEARD IT SAID THAT WE ARE DOING THIS WILLY-NILLY, ON AN

AD HOC BASIS.

THIS IS NOT
THE CASE. I CAN RECALL THE KIND OF STUDIES
THAT WE UNDERTOOK ON THIS WHOLE QUESTION OF ARMS IN THIS
AREA IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE EXODUS OF GREAT BRITAIN. WHAT
CONFRONTED US AT THAT PARTICULAR TIME WAS THIS: DO WE TRY
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TO FILL THIS KIND OF A VOID DIRECTLY OR DO WE UNDERTAKE A
POLICY OF HELPING THOSE WHO REALLY HAVE LEGITIMATE SECURITY
INTERESTS AND NEED THE ARMS FOR SELF-DEFENSE
PURPOSES. WE
CONCLUDED THE WAY TO PROCEED IN THIS AREA WAS TO TRY TO
HELP IN REGIONAL COOPERATION. WE SEE SAUDI ARABIA, IRAN
AND THESE COUNTRIES AS ELEMENTS OF STABILITY IN THE AREA
WITH LEGITIMATE SELF-DEFENSE NEEDS. IT IS NOT A QUESTION
OF WHETHER WE PROVIDE ARMS, OR NO ARMS GOING INTO THE AREA.
IT IS A QUESTION OF WHETHER WE PROVIDE THEM OR OTHERS, IN
CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE THEY PERCEIVE A REAL DANGER.

MR. VALERIANI: ARE YOU WILLING TO GO ALONG WITH A SIX-
MONTHS' MORATORIUM ON ARMS SHIPMENTS TO THE PERSIAN GULF
AS SUGGESTED BY SENATOR KENNEDY?

MR. SISCO: I HAVE READ THE PRESS REPORT THIS MORNING.
OBVIOUSLY, I HAVE NOT SEEN THE RESOLUTION ITSELF. BUT I
WOULD ONLY EMPHASIZE THAT WE FEEL THAT WE ARE MEETING A
LEGITIMATE CONCERN OF THE COUNTRIES IN THE AREA. THESE
ARE FRIENDS OF OURS, THESE ARE FRIENDS WHO ARE TRYING TO
PURSUE A MODERATE COURSE IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

MR. GWERTZMAN: SPEAKING OF ARMS, HAS THE ADMINISTRATION
DECIDED TO LIFT THE EMBARGO AGAINST ARMS SHIPMENTS TO
PAKISTAN?

MR. SISCO: I EXPECT AN ANNOUNCEMENT ON THIS VERY SOON. LET
ME SAY THAT WE HAVE FELT A RATHER ANOMALOUS SITUATION HAS
EXISTED IN THE AREA, WHERE ONE SIDE HAS BEEN GETTING ARMS
FROM THE SOVIETS AND HAS ITS OWN PRODUCTION CAPACITY,
WHEREAS THE OTHER SIDE--AN ALLY I MIGHT ADD, WITH WHOM WE
HAVE A FORMAL RELATIONSHIP--HAS BEEN DENIED THIS INsofar
AS THE UNITED STATES IS CONCERNED. THE MATTER HAS BEEN
UNDER ACTIVE CONSIDERATION. I EXPECT ANNOUNCEMENTS VERY
SOON.

MR. GWERTZMAN: FROM WHAT YOU ARE SAYING, I ASSUME THE
ANSWER IS WE WILL LIFT THE EMBARGO. DO YOU THINK THIS WILL
REALLY DAMAGE RELATIONS WITH INDIA AS THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT
SAYS IT WILL?
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MR. SISCO: IN MY JUDGMENT IT SHOULD NOT, BECAUSE I THINK WE HAVE EXPLAINED THIS QUITE THOROUGHLY. WE ARE NOT TRYING TO BALANCE ONE SIDE AGAINST THE OTHER IN THIS SITUATION. WE THINK THAT IT IS AS MUCH IN INDIA'S INTEREST TO HAVE A RELATIVELY SECURE PAKISTAN, TO PURSUE THE SO-CALLED SIMLA PROCESS, TO PURSUE THE PROCESS OF NEGOTIATION, AS IT IS IN THE INTERESTS OF PAKISTAN ITSELF.

MR. KRAFT: PEAKING AGAIN OF ARMS, THE WHITE HOUSE KEEPS SAYING THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS A COMMITMENT TO SOUTH VIETNAM AND ON THE BASIS OF THAT COMMITMENT IS PUSHING FOR THIS \$300-MILLION SUPPLEMENTAL. WHAT IS THAT COMMITMENT AND WHEN WAS THAT COMMITMENT MADE, TO WHOM AND BY WHOM AND WHEN?

MR. SISCO: LET ME JUST SAY THIS ABOUT SOUTH VIETNAM, WITHOUT GETTING INTO THE LEGAL BASIS. I THINK THAT WHAT IS CLEAR IS THAT WE, DIRECTLY, HAVE GOTTEN OUT OF SOUTH VIETNAM INsofar AS OUR OWN PERSONNEL ARE CONCERNED. THE QUESTION BEFORE US IS, DO WE CONTINUE TO SUPPORT SOUTH VIETNAM SO THAT IT CAN CONTINUE TO DEFEND ITSELF IN CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE IT CONTINUES TO BE UNDER THREAT. OUR JUDGMENT IS THAT THIS \$300 MILLION IS NEEDED TO DO THIS.

MR. TREWHITT: MR. SECRETARY, WE HAVEN'T TALKED ABOUT OIL AT ALL. I WILL ASK YOU WHETHER IT IS POSSIBLE TO SETTLE THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION POLITICALLY WITHOUT A CONCURRENT SETTLEMENT OF THE WHOLE QUESTION OF ENERGY AND OIL IN THE AREA?

MR. SISCO: I THINK THESE ARE TWO SEPARATE PROBLEMS, MR. TREWHITT. I THINK OBVIOUSLY, TO THE DEGREE TO WHICH WE CAN MAKE PROGRESS ON THE ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE, THIS WILL HELP THE OVERALL CLIMATE. BUT I THINK THE OIL QUESTION HAS TO BE RESOLVED ON ITS MERITS. I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE UNITED STATES DEVELOP ITS OWN INDEPENDENCE AND THAT IT NOT BE VULNERABLE TO OUTSIDE SOURCES. WE ARE NOT INTERESTED IN A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE ARABS. WE ARE INTERESTED IN A PRODUCER-CONSUMER DIALOGUE THAT RESOLVES THE PROBLEM.
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MR. SPIVAK: MR. SECRETARY, YOU HAVE WORKED PRETTY CLOSELY WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER NOW FOR SOME TIME AND HAVE HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO OBSERVE THE REACTION TO THE RECENT ATTACKS ON HIM BY CONGRESS AND THE PRESS. WHAT HAS BEEN THE EFFECT ON HIS POWER AND HIS INFLUENCE?

MR. SISCO: I DON'T SEE ANY DIMINUTION EITHER OF HIS POWER OR HIS INFLUENCE, MR. SPIVAK. FOR EXAMPLE, I SPENT THE

LAST TWO WEEKS WITH HIM IN THE MIDDLE EAST. I FIND IT VERY
SIGNIFICANT THAT BOTH SIDES ARE VERY ANXIOUS TO HAVE OUR
SECRETARY OF STATE CONTINUE THIS PROCESS. IN FACT, I WILL
GO FURTHER. BOTH SIDES SEE MR. KISSINGER AS THE INDISPENSI-
BLE ELEMENT IN THESE NEGOTIATIONS AND I SHARE THIS VIEW.
END QUOTE
KISSINGER

UNCLASSIFIED

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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